

Present continuous SEMESTRAL UNI - 2023 II

Present continuous

The present continuous is made from the **present tense of the verb be** and the **-ing form** of a verb:

<i>I am</i>	<i>working</i>
<i>You are</i>	<i>playing</i>
<i>He is</i>	<i>talking</i>
<i>She is</i>	<i>living</i>
<i>It is</i>	<i>eating</i>
<i>We are</i>	<i>staying</i>
<i>They are</i>	<i>sleeping</i>

We use the present continuous to talk about:

- **activities at the moment of speaking:**

*I'm just **leaving** work. I'll be home in an hour.*

*Please be quiet. The children **are sleeping**.*

- **future plans or arrangements:**

*Mary **is going** to a new school next term.*

*What **are** you **doing** next week?*

Present continuous questions

We make questions by putting **am, is** or **are** in front of the **subject**:

***Are you** listening?*

***Are they** coming to your party?*

*When **is she** going home?*

*What **am I** doing here?*

Present continuous negatives

We make negatives by putting **not** (or **n't**) after **am, is** or **are**:

*I'm **not** doing that.*

*You **aren't** listening. (or You're **not** listening.)*

*They **aren't** coming to the party. (or They're **not** coming to the party.)*

*She **isn't** going home until Monday. (or She's **not** going home until Monday.)*

Stative verbs

We do not normally use the continuous **with stative verbs**. Stative verbs include:

- verbs of **thinking and feeling**:

<i>believe</i>	<i>love</i>	<i>recognise</i>	<i>understand</i>
<i>dislike</i>	<i>hate</i>	<i>remember</i>	<i>want</i>
<i>know</i>	<i>prefer</i>	<i>suppose</i>	<i>wish</i>
<i>like</i>	<i>realise</i>	<i>think (= believe)</i>	

- verbs of the senses:

<i>appear</i>	<i>look</i>	<i>smell</i>	<i>taste</i>
<i>feel</i>	<i>seem</i>	<i>sound</i>	

- others:

<i>agree</i>	<i>belong</i>	<i>need</i>	<i>own</i>
<i>be</i>	<i>disagree</i>	<i>owe</i>	<i>possess</i>

We normally use the simple instead:

I understand you. (NOT *I am understanding you.*)

This cake tastes wonderful. (NOT *This cake is tasting wonderful.*)

We also use the present continuous to talk about:

- something which is happening **before and after a specific time**:

*At eight o'clock we **are** usually **having** breakfast.*

*When I get home the children **are doing** their homework.*

- something which **we think is temporary**:

*Michael is at university. He's **studying** history.*

*I'm **working** in London for the next two weeks.*

- something which is **new** and **contrasts** with a previous state:

*These days most people **are using** email instead of writing letters.*

*What sort of clothes **are** teenagers **wearing** nowadays?*

*What sort of music **are** they **listening** to?*



- something which is changing, growing or developing:

*The children **are growing up** quickly.*

*The climate **is changing** rapidly.*

*Your English **is improving**.*

- something which happens **again and again**:

*It's **always raining** in London.*

*They **are always arguing**.*

*George is great. He's **always laughing**.*

Note that we normally use always with this use.

What's the difference?

Present Simple and Present Continuous

Present Simple	Present Continuous
Things which are always true: • Water boils at 100 degrees.	Things which are happening at the moment of speaking: • The water is boiling now, so you can put in the pasta.
Permanent situations (or nearly permanent; true for a few years at least): • Julie lives in London.	Temporary situations: • Julie is living in Paris for a few months (usually she lives in London). Situations which are slowly changing: • I'm getting better and better at speaking English.
Habits or things we do regularly: • I drink coffee every morning.	Temporary or new habits: • I'm drinking too much coffee these days because I'm so busy at work. Annoying habits (usually with 'always'): • My flatmate is always leaving the kitchen in a mess!
Future events which are part of a timetable: • My plane leaves at eight tonight. To talk about the future after certain words ('when' 'until' 'after' 'before' 'as soon as'): • I'll call you when I get home.	Definite future plans: • I'm meeting John after class today.
To talk about what happens in books, plays and films: • At the end of the book, the detective catches the killer.	To talk about people in pictures and photos: • In this photo, my mother is walking beside a lake.

Remember:

- We use the present simple with **stative verbs**. We can't use any continuous tense (including the present continuous tense, of course) with stative verbs.